

Plumas-Sierra Noxious WEEDS Management Group

“We Eradicate Exotic and Detrimental Species”

Notes of January 14th 2003 Meeting

In attendance:

Allan Abrams
Celeste Avila
Jim Belsher-Howe
Karl Bishop
Chris Christofferson
Linda Conrad
Colin Dillingham

Bob Farnworth
Ed Finley
Gail Frazier
Holly George
Shannon Neilsen
Duane Scheurer

Karl called the meeting to order at approximately 10:10 a.m. at the Plumas-Sierra Department of Agriculture's Boardroom, 208 Fairgrounds Road, Quincy, California. The meeting notes of November 14th, 2002 were approved with no corrections or additions.

SB1740 Project Updates

YST Control on Private Lands Cooperative Project

Karl stated that the program is going to continue, letters will be sent out to all participants from the last couple of years. Transline will be made available for their use, all they need to do is come in and get signed up. The program will be done more on a one on one basis. The public will be made aware through the local newspaper and the 4-H newsletter. Some non-participating private landowners with large YST problems will be contacted by door knocking if necessary. Karl said some areas of concern are in the Indian Valley area, especially Diamond Mountain Road. Colin made reference to an area he noticed along Chandler road by Spanish Creek at the entrance road to Oakland Camp where there was an abundance of YST. It was determined he was talking about part of Phil Bresciani's property and the equestrian center across from Phil's property. Karl assured the group that Phil would be participating in YST this coming year. Holly also noticed an area along Mill Creek Rd that is also on Bresciani's property.

Perennial Pepperweed on Private Lands Cooperative Project

Karl reported the Perennial Pepperweed on Private Lands Cooperative Project workshop to be held on March 19th, 2003 at the Community Center in Loyalton. Rob Wilson will be a presenter at the workshop. Rob has several TWT test areas and various chemicals he is trying. Karl said that Rob had told him that there might be a possibility the label for Telar could change for range use. Holly asked if the timing for using Telar was important. Karl said that Rob had done a research paper and that in fact you do not have to use it early in the year and that it is effective during the latter part of the summer as well, although at the higher rates. Karl had recently talked to Jim Smith from the Sierra Valley area. Jim made reference to trying mechanical means as a way to control TWT on his property. Karl told Jim that he would follow up on this method with Rob Wilson his concern being using mechanical methods or mowing small pieces of the plant would be thrown about and would resprout. Holly asked about the Beckworth Airport and the YST that was there before the construction. The group discussed this and figured it will either get better or worse and time will tell. Holly then brought up the

construction taking place at Feather River College. Comments were made that Jim Kruk was taking his biology class out to do hand pulling along the roadsides and on campus.

Reports/Plans

Karl reported he had talked to Steve Schoenig regarding SB1740 and that the funds can be rolled over to following years so we can stretch the money out during the coming lean years. Tim's reports are on track and he has sent e-mails to group members for in kind hours, etc. Holly asked if the reports had anything in them that would interest P.S. weed group members and if there is a summary available so when talking to others we would have information available. Karl said he make note to Tim to forward reports to all members.

Roadside

Linda has been spraying scotch broom in Yuba County along county road S-180, that's the 3.5-mile area from hwy 49 and the Sierra county line. She sprayed approximately 2.5 miles already and will complete when weather permits. Linda reported that some property owners have stopped and asked lots of questions with some negative and positive concerns. Karl then reported to group that a Western Black-Legged Tick had bitten Linda on Tuesday of last week. The bite had the characteristic red blotch around it. Karl and Linda decided it would be smart to visit the Doctor and get it checked out. Linda said she received a blood test for Lyme Disease and would get results within a week's time, meanwhile she is taking antibiotics. Karl and the group agreed that Lyme disease was very serious with long-term effects if untreated. Linda will be taking the antibiotics for 21 days.

2003 Strategic Plan

This agenda item was moved to the next meeting.

PNF Noxious Weed Treatment Proposed Action

Chris told the group that the draft for the proposed action has been sent to other USFS specialists for comments. He has gotten responses from the Hydrologist in Beckworth with her concerns regarding the TWT site along the Middle Fork. She wanted to have a better idea of how close the weeds are to the river. Following the meeting Chris was planning to do some GPS mapping on the river to check out her concerns. Chris is hoping to hear from a couple more specialists and then we can move forward. He is guessing a couple more months before the action is completed.

Effects of CDFA Budget Cuts on State Weed Projects

Ed Finley told the group that from December till now the State has taken 8 positions and cut the department by \$750,000. A new district map has been made to show the changes in districts and personnel. Ed stated that there is another equal cut planned to come in July taking the number up to 14 people. These cuts add up to just about half of their total budget. With these cuts, the focus of the weed program will be to focus it's efforts on the survey and detection of a select list of A-rated noxious weeds, communicating this information to the county Agriculture Commissioners and the Weed Management Areas for treatment, and education of the public and the other agencies on the identification and control of these same weeds.

What will no longer be accomplished in the Weed Program

The Weed Program will no longer conduct eradication activities of noxious weeds, with a few minor exceptions to be discussed below. The Weed Program will no longer fund A-rated noxious weed control and eradication activities in California's most highly invaded counties, Siskiyou, Modoc, and Lassen. In addition, the Weed Program will no longer survey or monitor the following A-rated noxious weeds: punagrass, biddy-biddy, rush skeleton weed, fertile capeweed, whitestem distaff thistle, yellowspine thistle, bearded creeper, leafy spurge, halogeton, harmel, and giant salvinia.

Impact

If the county Agriculture Commissioner and/or the Weed Management Areas don't assume the eradication efforts of identified A-rated noxious weeds, these same weeds will spread over the rangelands and pastures, wild lands, forest, parklands, and roadsides of California. This could result in degraded rangelands and pastures (lower feed value), more soil erosion, and displacement of native plant communities by monocultures of noxious weeds, increased fire hazards in forests and along roadsides, and decreased visibility along roadsides. These impacts will be most severe in the most highly invaded counties, and along major highway corridors of the state.

What will be accomplished in the future

The Weed Program will focus its efforts on the survey and detection of selected A-rated noxious weeds along targeted "high risk" corridors of entry and spread within the State of California. The selected A-rated noxious weeds include spotted, diffuse, and squarrose knapweeds; musk, plumes, and Scotch thistle; camelthorn, Dalmatian toadflax, wormleaf salsola, and alligatorweed. Targeted "high risk" corridors will be defined, but will generally include all major highways into and through the state, including roadside rest areas and campgrounds. Targeted "high risk" areas include areas such as marinas and trailheads. Targeted "high risk" areas will also include all susceptible ecosystems within a reasonable distance from known infested sites. Other areas of concern will include all reports from the public as to the sighting of any of these weeds. The location and size of detected populations of these weeds will be recorded and mapped using Global Positioning System/Geographic Information System technology and this information passed on to the County Agriculture Commissioners and the local Weed Management Areas.

The Weed Program will continue eradication activities on focused weeds that are near eradication. These include illyrian thistle, golden thistle, and camelthorn. These weeds all have infestations covering less than 0.01- acre in area.

The Weed Program will assist the County Agriculture Commissioners and the Weed Management Areas to prepare grant proposals to obtain funds to conduct eradication activities on noxious weeds.

The Weed Program will continue with noxious weed education. This includes education on noxious weed identification, ecology, and control. Target audiences include the general public, county biologists, and Weed Warriors (Weed Management Areas).

Karl spoke to the group about the Animal damage program and that the state had pulled all their funding out of that program, the cost of which is split equally between the County, State and Feds. The Border stations will also be taking cuts, with the total equaling \$1.5 million. Funding for chemicals in some counties will also be eliminated. Karl would like to write a letter with our dismay and also ask that possibly cuts be spread throughout CDFA and not just specific areas. Holly made a motion that Karl proceeded with his letter and Ed Findley seconded it. The group all voted in favor.

Update on Noxious Weed Brochures

Karl reported for Celeste on the progress of the Weed Brochures, things are looking good. He made some changes correcting some typos and adding some comments. Holly made reference to an area in the brochures for Perennial Pepperweed titled: "What can I do?" She thought that more detail should be given with this particular weed when it comes to what to do when you find small plant or how to dispose of it. Karl agreed and will attach a note for Celeste to make corrections.

Weed Free Forage

Karl reports that they are back to square one again. It has been decided to put together an MOU. Karl has drafted a new MOU outlining each department's responsibilities. Stack inspections would be allowed under the new rules using quarantine guidelines. Any feed that comes from a pelletizing mill would be considered weed free because of the process used to make the pellets. We are working on a new term possibly Low Risk instead of Weed Free. Karl said that they would be returning back to certificates instead of twine because of the cost issue.

Additional Agenda Items

Ed Finley asked Duane if the budget cuts are affecting Cal Trans? His department gets their funding from gas tax. He also said they lost 22 positions, no one laid off because the positions were vacant. Ed Finley asked about some roadside baling that took place in Yolo County. Duane told the group that a farmer had volunteered to take care of 22 miles of roadside and then he sold the bales for profit. Chris asked if Caltrans would be reseeding with annual grasses? Duane said he still had to check on that. Caltrans is trying to look into buying their own equipment and possibly taking the baled hay to a co-generation plant.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, March 12, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. It will be held at the Plumas-Sierra Department of Agriculture Conference Room, 208 Fairgrounds Road, in Quincy, California. Agenda items may be submitted in advance or on the day of the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:45 am.

Meeting notes submitted by Linda Conrad, Plumas-Sierra Counties Department of Agriculture